

DR WHO?

Time warp raises a storm



Former Dr Who, PETER DAVISON, and his assistant Tegan, JANET FIELDING, in the series.

Dr Who, the timeless time lord of television, frozen into a time warp by his masters, will be away from our planet for the next 18 months.

It was devastating news for the legions of Dr Who fans — and for actor Colin Baker who plays the time lord.

"I'm staggered and disappointed," he said of the decision of BBC controller Michael Grade to take the program off.

And he is supported by Dr Who's official historian, Peter Haining, who predicts a tremendous outcry from fans to save the show with 110 million viewers in 54 countries.

Angry fans have been bombarding the BBC with complaints — from Australia and the US in particular.

Finance

But it is finance that has finally sent the good doctor off in his time-warping police box without a new adventure.

The \$300,000 which it costs to make each episode of Dr Who — about \$4 million for a series — is being earmarked for new productions.

Colin Baker, 40, said: "I'm astounded that the BBC sees fit to axe its most popular product — one that is sold all over the world and probably recoups most of its costs."

"The program, which has been running for 22 years, is part of our way of life — like cricket."

From

JOHN MURCHE
in London

He was contracted to make the next series two months ago, along with actress Nicola Bryant as his assistant Peri.

Marches and demonstrations through London are being mooted and complaining mail and phone calls have swamped both the BBC and Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher.

Supporters in America even reckon they can raise the money to ensure the next series can go into production in a co-production deal.

A Band Aid-style record has been rushed into production to raise cash for the Save Dr Who cause.

Record

Colin Baker and Nicola Bryant joined the group, Who Cares? to make the record, Dr In Distress, along with Bucks Fizz star Bobby Gee, Justin Hayward and John Lodge of the Moody Blues, Ultravox singer Hazel Dean and comedian Faith Brown.

While the BBC's big chiefs are keen to bar it from their programs, disc jockeys are equally adamant they will feature the record on their shows.

David Saunders, 32, coordinator of the Dr Who Appreciation Society, says they are worried about the doctor's long term future.

They fear the 18-month spell in another dimension may prove terminal for the eternal voyager.

Saunders says he fears that a replacement sci-fi show which is being studied might permanently replace their hero.

AUSSIES ARE DELIGHTED

Australian fans are delighted over the suspension of the Dr Who series.

Long time fan club member in Brisbane, Steven Collins, said: "No genuine Who fan club member could be in favor of the way the program has gone over the past three years."

"The producer in that time, John Nathan-Turner, has turned it into a pantomime fantasy, at odds with everything the program has been over the past 20 years."

"He has created a vehicle to get exposure for himself and imposes his will

on every aspect of the show. The director and the actors are just puppets."

"I would rather see Dr Who cancelled forever than continue under Nathan-Turner's reign."

Mr Collins said Dr Who usually enjoyed a British audience of 14 million.

When Colin Baker appeared in the first episode in January the figure dropped to nine million. By the second episode it dropped to six million.

"I'm glad they're stopping it before it slips further," he said. "It's better to look back and remember the good times."

CATTLEMEN FIGHT CLAIM

● The Cattlemen's Union yesterday forecast a head-on confrontation between the beef industry and the Commonwealth Meat Inspectors over their claim for a 38-hour week.

● Cattlemen's Union executive director Mr Rick Farley said the move was provocative and would be totally opposed.

● He said the extra costs would reduce Australia's ability to compete in fragile export markets.

Businessman held over \$1m fraud case

A North Queensland businessman police want to interview about a \$1 million fraud has been arrested in Tasmania.

A man known as John Maxwell is being held in a Hobart jail.

A Townsville detective will leave for Tasmania today to arrange the man's extradition.

Townsville CIB chief, Det Sen Sgt Warren Smithers, said the man could appear in the Townsville Magistrates Court on Wednesday. Warrants were issued

for his arrest six months ago.

Federal and State police were alerted to watch for Mr Maxwell, a former principal of the now defunct John Maxwell Copiers company.

Born in Innisfail, Mr Maxwell's real name is thought to be of Sicilian origin and police said he was known to use aliases.

His car, found abandoned at Mackay Airport last September, was exa-

mined by forensic experts.

Police seized documents from the car and at one stage believed Mr Maxwell may have gone to Brazil.

Warrants said Mr Maxwell was wanted for alleged fraud over three years for at least \$350,000 from a finance company.

Police claimed auditors were working on the case and Mr Maxwell could face charges involving more than \$1 million.